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TO DISCOVER THE
V I S I B L E M A R K S
O F
C H R I S T ' S C H U R C H ,

ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF
H O L Y W R I T .

By WILLIAM CLARK, M.D.
Late of COLCHESTER. *K*

*The Church of God is the Pillar of Truth, A City
set upon a Hill, cannot be hid.*

COLCHESTER;
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THE following Reflections are not intended accurately to consider the different acceptations under which, the Phrase, *the Church of Christ*, may be taken; as it figuratively regards the outward and true Jew and Christian, or as it may signify the Body, of which Christ is the head, collectively considered, consisting of all that are sanctified by Christ Jesus, both in Time and Eternity: But restrict the phrase to the real and nominal professors of Christianity in external communities; for as the dispensations of God to mankind have been various, in calling and gathering a People to be as Lights in a degenerate World, as best suited the divine Wisdom in every Age, the prophetic

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phetical dispensation, both accompanying and succeeding the legal to the Jews; and the Christian, into which the Gentiles were admitted, succeeding to both.

It is no less probable, that the Church of Christ may at present be discovered by its proper marks; and the sincere, associating with this Church, are in the best situation for improvement, in the highest concerns that can effect mankind, both here and hereafter.

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Some of the most remarkable distinctions of Christian Professions, are cursorily mentioned in the following Reflections, without entering into a more minute detection of their errors; which is left to any future occasion, that may discover its service.

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E S S A Y
TO DISCOVER THE
V I S I B L E M A R K S
o f
CHRIST'S CHURCH.
SECTION I.

1. **S**OME appear to be of opinion, that if they join in a Society of Christians, among all the variety of their denominations, though they may not approve all the doctrines and practices of the community, they may nevertheless be true Christians, and thereby seem to put all Societies assuming the name of Christian upon an equal footing.

2. Some of them, probably, have misapplied the extensive Charity to be found in the writings of many good Christians, to the sincere, under every denomination, the

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better to reconcile their Consciences to the Society, as most agreeable to their natural inclinations, or predominating interests.

3. The pious William Law, in answer to Doctor Trapp, is very favourable in his sentiments of Roman Catholicks, insomuch as to endeavour to extenuate the odium in Protestants to transubstantiation. He likewise expresses his charity towards some Dissenters from the Church of England, though he is sorrowfully affected, under the consideration of the numerous distinctions in the profession of christianity, and has somewhere intimated, that Jacob Behmen (whom he styles the blessed) did not aim at setting up a different profession of Religion from that in which he was educated; but this is not very consistent with his opposition to the doctrine and practices he approves, or to his prediction in his *Mysterium Magnum*, of a people that should be raised in the acknowledgement of the principles of Religion he recommended; which was not long before the rise of the Quakers, who appeared in
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the profession of many of the valuable truths, in his *Mysterium Magnum*, very different from the religion of Behmen's education, and quite consistent with the tenour of his own conduct. vid. xxxv and xli Chapters of his Exposition upon Genesis.

4. And it may be observed that even William Law recommends such a blameless conduct to the Clergy, so entirely engrossed and eaten up with the zeal of God's house, as would really render them as different from the generality in the same profession, as effectually to distinguish them from other Societies of Christians, as any Society can be distinguished from another.

5. It must however be allowed that mere profession of Truth, without a suitable Life and Conversation, can be of no importance in advancing Salvation; but the advantages of the sincere will appear to a demonstration, in their attaining higher improvements, and greater excellencies in Religion and
Virtue

Virtue than they could otherwise ever obtain.

6. In order to discover whether it be a matter of indifference with what denomination of Christians we join in community, and make an impartial judgment to what religious Society we ought to give the preference, and join in community with ; it seems necessary to examine whether any obvious marks of the true profession of christianity, whereby it may be distinguished, be recorded in the Scriptures of Truth ; whether Christians of all denominations are not impartially obliged to make this diligent enquiry ; and if by a diligent and impartial search, they discover the true profession of christianity, whether they ought not without hesitation to join with it ; and in such a procedure, Charity cannot be impeached, by rejecting all other Churches as more or less antichristian, in consequence of this pursuit.

7. Upon the first Question, it may be observed, that example, (as is commonly said)

faid) goes beyond precept, and that therefore it were to be wished, that all good People united in promoting the welfare of their fellow Creatures, which can no way be so well affected as by their union to advance the same good design, agreeable to the advice of our blessed Saviour, Matth. v. 16. Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

8. Our Lord told the woman of Samaria, John iv. 23, 24. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him; God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.

9. Accordingly, having commanded his Disciples to wait at Jerusalem, to be endued with power from on high, he commissioned them to go and teach all Nations; promising to be with them to the end of the World.

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10. Thus the Church of Christ consisted of such as received the message of his Apostles, and assembled together in his Name, who richly provided for their edification in the most holy Faith, by bestowing on them all requisite spiritual gifts. Beside Prophecy, which was speaking by the assistance of the Holy Ghost to Edification, Exhortation, and Comfort; 1 Cor. xiv. 3. He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; Eph. iv. 11, 12. He is called the head of the Church, Col. i. 18. from whom the whole Body, fitly joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh encrease of the Body, unto the edifying of itself in Love; Eph. iv. 16, and Col. ii. 19, sheweth how the Members degenerate, not holding the Head, from which all the Body, by Joints and Bands, having
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nourishment ministred and knit together,
encreaseth with the encrease of God.

11. Thus we see what constituted, nourished and preserved the primitive Church of Christ, and consequently what is no less necessary to its present growth and preservation; *non minus est quam vincere parta tueri.*

The Spoils of Warfare to maintain,
Require the Power they did to gain.

12. And that each particular member of Christ's Church, was not to depend merely on instruments, though so highly qualified by the Holy Spirit, may be concluded from, John xiv. 23, If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

13. In the preceeding part of the chapter, he says, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit

Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. ver. 16, 17, and 26, He shall teach you all Things, and bring all Things to your Remembrance, whatsoever I said and did; agreeable to 1 John ii. 27, But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all Things, and is Truth, and is no Lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

14. The Apostle Paul gives this summary account of the design and constitution of the Church of Christ; Eph. v. 26, 27, Christ so loved the Church, that he gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish,

15. Christ

15. Christ therefore came that Sinners might become members of his glorious Church, built of polished stones, of which Christ, though rejected of the chief master builders, was metaphorically said to be the chief corner stone, Matth. xxi. 42, and Christ invites all, that thirst, to come unto him; promising, that whosoever believeth on him, out of his Belly shall flow rivers of living water, which as the Evangelist John vii. 38, 39, says, this spake he of the Spirit, which Believers should receive.

16. From the preceeding, as well as other passages of the holy Scriptures, we may conclude it necessary for a true Member of the Church of Christ, to become his Disciple, by Self-denial, and a daily Cross to all vitious Inclinations; and having experienced the operation of his Spirit, Tit. iii. 5, and Regeneration by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, he will of course, unite with all in the same experience, wherever he finds them, and joining with them, in waiting upon the great Head of the Body, for his

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teaching

teaching and assistance, to worship the Father in Spirit and Truth : He will be concerned to strengthen his Brethren, and invite others to be partakers with them, in the high Privileges of Christianity, in becoming Sons of God, led and guided by his Spirit, and Members of the Church of Christ ; who furnishes his Members with that portion of the Bread of Life, which is necessary for their daily subsistence ; and makes those, by whom he pleases to minister, distributors of it to others ; by which they are nourished up to eternal Life, and know a growth from the state of Children, to the stature of Men in Christ Jesus.

17. As the power of godliness, more than the form, displays itself in their Assemblies, and Conversations ; both Ministers and Hearers will be careful not to offer the sacrifice of Fools ; well knowing the preparation of the Heart, as well as the answer of the Tongue, is of the Lord, without whose assistance, by which all worship in Spirit and Truth must be directed, they cannot

not see the condition of their own Souls, as they stand in the sight of God; and therefore, they cannot pray as they ought, much less advise others, but by the assistance of the Spirit, which searcheth the deep Things of God, and knows the inmost recesses of every mind, and is touched with such a feeling of our infirmities, having ability to assist them; and is so merciful, that he never fails to afford saving Health to such as rely on him, or in other words, are in the Faith.

SECTION

SECTION II.

1. **QUESTION**; Whether Christians of all denominations, are not obliged to make an impartial enquiry, for the most authentick profession of Religion? Answer; It must proceed from great indifference, to be careless and negligent in our enquiries after the profession of true Religion in Purity, and implies nothing less than Ignorance of it's nature, and of the impossibility of obtaining Happiness without it, in Time or Eternity.

2. A Man must be to a great degree inadvertent, not to feel at certain times his Misery in the pursuit of human Pleasures, as well as the impossibility of securing the uninterrupted enjoyment of them, in this Life. His highest interest therefore, obliges him to have recourse to what will best administer a remedy against the miseries of human Life, arising from unavoidable

able afflictions, and procure him solid satisfaction, and tranquillity, after all applications every other way for it prove in vain.

3. Can it be supposed, that the gratifications of this Life, if the governing principle, can satisfy an immortal Soul, which must necessarily exist after the death of the Body? If we should be so unhappy as not to find our misery in the pursuit of them; can we upon reflection, imagine, that the attachment of our affection to things, which in their best enjoyment are only the pleasures of this Life; can administer less than infinite misery in another World, wherein these affections of the Soul must for ever be separated from that, wherein their happiness is placed? And how must this be aggravated, by the just punishment inflicted by the Almighty for the transgression of his Laws, ratified by Conscience, and the refusal of divine Assistance, rightly and most completely to enjoy the Blessings of this Life, and endless Felicity hereafter!

4. Thus

4. Thus it appears to the Eye of Reason, how foolish it would be to neglect a diligent search after the true Religion, and Church of Christ; wherein the power of godliness mortifying our sinful lusts, weaning our affections from lower enjoyments, and raising the Love of God into Dominion in the Soul, is to be found; unincumbered with foreign traditions, and institutions of human invention, at the best of the nature of Jewish Rituals, Heb. x. 4. that cannot make the comers thereunto perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience.

SECTION

SECTION III.

1. **I**F it be asked, whether if by diligent and impartial enquiry, Christians discover the true Church of Christ, they ought not, without hesitation, to join with it? Answer, As it is absolutely necessary to keep our consciences void of offence towards God and Man, we must obey the Truth in all things ; for if we endeavour to put God off, with as little obedience as possible, like niggards to the bountiful giver ; of all the blessings we do, or can enjoy, how can we hope for his acceptance? may we not rather fear that our Saviour will deny us before his heavenly Father, if we deny him before men? and as he has told us, he that doth his Will, shall know of his Doctrine, we must necessarily remain in ignorance, in not complying with his Will, and at length be betrayed to hardness of Heart, by the deceitfulness of Sin. How much more suitable then would it be, with Paul, to
give

give up to the heavenly call, without reasoning with Flesh and Blood?

2. If we rest any where short of meeting in the name of Christ to worship the Father, we shall be apt to mistake the voice of the Stranger, for the voice of the true Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls, and may consequently be excluded from the number of his Sheep, and the pastures of Life and Salvation.

3. Thus, instead of being Patterns, and Examples to the Flock of Christ, in his Church, and promoting the growth and increase of it to the utmost of our power, by continual accessions to it, that Righteousness may cover the Earth, as the Waters cover the Sea; we shall in some degree hinder the prosperity of Religion, by occasioning those who are influenced by our example, to take up a rest even short of the profession of true Christianity.

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4. The additional strength and assistance individuals receive in the promotion of temporal interests, by their union in Companies and Bodies Corporate, beyond what they could acquire separately, may somewhat tend to illustrate the great advantages to be obtained by the union of each individual in the Church of Christ; but the Importance of this last union as infinitely transcends the mean regards of this Life in the former union, as our well being here and hereafter doth the uncertain enjoyments of Time.

5. Can it be less than presumption, to continue in such professions, as the indulgence of worldly Friendships and secular Interests most strongly recommend? this is far short of making grateful returns for the Love of God extended to us through Christ, and can only proceed from the want of giving up our Hearts and Affections to the guidance of his good Spirit, in which case we cannot arrive at those high im-

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provements

provements in true Religion, of which we are otherwise capable.

6. Our blessed Saviour said to his Disciples, John xvi. 13, 14. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you Things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you. 23, 24. In that Day ye shall ask me nothing: Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you. That this blessed experience was not restricted to his immediate Disciples may be inferred from his Prayer, Chapter xvii. 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word.

SECTION

SECTION IV.

I. **T**O the Question, Whether Charity will at all be impeached by rejecting all other Churches, but the true Church of Christ, as more or less antichristian, in consequence of the pursuit of Truth? Answer, Under this consideration, Charity will still continue unviolated, for though it may be allowed, that all good Christians of every denomination, not to say Heathens, who fulfil the Law of Christ written in their Hearts, may be said to be Members of the universal Church of Christ, and to have in some sense, communion in Spirit with it, yet it seems clear, this consideration of the universal Church can extend no farther under all denominations, than to such individuals as embrace the Church, or profession most agreeable to the light of Faith, manifested in every Conscience ; which prevents not the necessity of every true Christian's
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joining and associating with the true Church when discovered.

2. It may not perhaps be an unprofitable employment to examine the claims of Christians, most remarkably distinguished by profession to be the visible Church of Christ, with such strictures, as we pass along, as are consistent with the Love of Truth.

3. Papists are known to ingross Salvation within the pale of their own Church, contrary to the observation of the Apostle Peter, that in every Nation, such as fear God and work Righteousness are accepted, Acts x. 35. but Protestants agree that they are by no means to be supposed the visible Church of Christ, unspotted and without blemish, who make merchandize of men's Souls by their indulgences; and have corrupted the worship of God by their numerous superstitions, idolatrous Prayers to Saints and Angels, and blasphemous celebration of what is called the Sacrament of the

the Lord's Supper, by their principle of transubstantiation; such however among them as fear God and work Righteousness, will undoubtedly be accepted by him, notwithstanding as a Church, they are so vastly degenerated from the primitive Doctrines of Christianity.

4. Protestants of almost all denominations agree in making the Scriptures the rule of their Faith and Practice; but they have in general much better succeeded in destroying the claims of others, who differ from them; for, upon a strict scrutiny it will be found, they have formed their own Churches neither upon the foundation of Christ and his Apostles in vital Christianity, nor according to the testimony of holy Writ, concerning the Church of Christ; as will more particularly appear by a view of some of their principal distinctions.

5. The Lutherans and Calvinists are to be approved so far as they have shaken off the gross Superstitions and Idolatry of the Church

Church of Rome; though they still retain many Things of Man's invention in the worship of God, and continue various ceremonies in the Christian Church, which were either of Jewish original, or of the nature of that dispensation, and abolished by the coming of Christ, at least as essential to Salvation. Witness their various doctrines of Baptism and the Supper, ordination of Ministers, their call and maintenance, &c. both inconsistent with Scripture, Precept, and Example, to which they appeal in their own vindication, acknowledging the Scriptures to be the supreme arbiter of all controversy, and primary rule of conduct in all things, and in reality ascribing to them those attributes, which by the Scriptures are ascribed to Christ, and the influence of his Spirit, the glorious privilege of the Gospel Dispensation.

6. The like may be said of the established Church, which according to Bishop Burnet, in his History of the Reformation, was not reformed so far as might be expected, from
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the too great regard Queen Elizabeth paid to pomp and splendour in Religion; and it may seem very strange to indifferent and impartial judges, that the validity of the ordination of Ministers should be derived from the Church of Rome.

7. I need not enter into a disquisition of the diversity of opinions between Episcopalians and Presbyterians, the one acknowledging the government of Bishops, the other of a Presbytery; as things of no great moment; both being in their present forms, in some degree, alike of human institution. I shall only remark, the tendency of Free Will, if considered as independent of supernatural assistance; and Predestination, as asserted, without any relation to the obedience of Faith; that they are both Doctrines subversive of true Religion.

8. The Baptists, who agree very much with Presbyterians in other respects, may be allowed to use the ceremony of dipping Adults in Baptism, more consonantly to
Scripture

Scripture Example and Practice; but I believe it will be as difficult for them to prove *that* to be the Baptism of Christ, as to make it appear that the gift of the Holy Ghost, or Regeneration, is necessarily consequent upon it; notwithstanding his promise to be with his Disciples to the end of the World.

9. There are the distinctions of Methodists and Moravians, acknowledging themselves of the established Church, though disallowed by others to belong to it, so far as they differ in external rules of religious Practice, and separate Meetings; among whom I doubt not, but there may be many sincere Christians; yet as they are zealous for forms of godliness, not at all necessarily connected with its power, in numerous repetitions of Prayers and Confessions, public and private, very much encreasing bodily exercise in worship, contrary to the precept of our blessed Saviour; and in the practice of Piety respecting Alms, Prayers, &c. the ostentation of which he disapproves.

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It is well if their zeal doth not more contribute to the growth of hipocrisy than true Religion.

10. It may be observed of establishments in general, more especially where they are made qualifications for civil offices in the state, as well as ecclesiastical ones in the Church, and tests to the exclusion of others, that it is no wonder great numbers throng into them for the Loaves and Fishes.

11. No Society of Christians can be deemed the true Church of Christ, whose œconomy prevents the possibility of the unlimited exercise of the manifold Grace of God for the edification of his Church; practised in the apostolical and succeeding Ages, till human power and wisdom modelled the Church, and made her Bishops, Ministers, Presbyters, Deacons, and all other Officers, and composed her publick Service; to support which, Schools of human Arts and Sciences became the means to qualify Ministers of the Gospel, contrary

to the method by which it was first propagated, when not many wise or learned were eminent; but such were employed as instruments in the Conversion of Mankind, as were adopted under the qualification of divine Grace, and by a suitable Example, to prevail on men to embrace the doctrine of an humble, meek, and self-denying Jesus, to whose image they were to be conformed.

12. As Men were always led Captive by the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life, with the numerous vices comprehended under those distinctions; learned pride, or mere human acquirements in Ministers, are much more likely to strengthen than to eradicate these vices. True Ministers knew the power of the Cross to overcome these evils in themselves, by the aid of Christ, before they were called by him to bring their fellow-creatures to the same power manifested in themselves, for the same end; When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren,
 Luke

Luke xxii. 32, an undertaking superior to the art and wisdom of men; but what can be expected of this sort, where Laws prevent the exercise of any supernatural power in the work of the ministry, in any besides the single person appointed to preach, pray, &c. without regard to those divine qualifications that are alone equal to the work.

13. The prescribed services of the Church have reduced Religion to an art, in which the greatest Sinners may become as great proficient as the greatest Saints; and it is much if it may not too often be the means of perswading Sinners they are really Saints, while at the same time they are diverted from the most important concern, the knowledge of themselves, through the knowledge of God in themselves, to be obtained in waiting humbly upon him, and also for his instructions respecting the duties most immediately necessary; whereby an opportunity might be given to the Spirit of Truth; (the best of all Preachers) whose office is to convince the world of Sin, to speak home

to every Man's Conscience, and discover to him the deceit and wickedness of his own Heart, bringing him under the burden of Sin and Condemnation for it in himself; which as he submits to, and embraces as his proper portion, would soon reduce him to be weary of it, and at the same time shew him the impossibility of all his Faculties and Powers as a Man, to help himself in this deplorable condition. Thus he might come to experience a Death to his beloved Lusts, and from a sense of his misery, call out, a Saviour, or I die! a Redeemer, or I perish for ever! which being the Prayer of his Heart, would be more effectual then the best composed Form of Man's Invention, not arising from the pressing necessity of his own Soul.

14. This Man in some measure knows the work of Repentance, and is become an object of the invitation of Christ. Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest to your Souls; and the same Spirit of Truth, in his
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perseverence, will become his Comforter ; begetting the Faith, that works by Love, to the purifying the Heart, which is the Saint's victory ; in which he will grow from one degree of Grace to another, 'till in the prophetic Language, he has fully known the Refiner's Fire, and the Fuller's Soap to cleanse him from his Sins ; though as deep as Scarlet or Crimson. Thus he may become wiser than his Teachers, capable by the same Spirit of Truth to assist his Brethren, and commendably fill the station assigned him by Providence in the Creation.

15. The great error of supporting an œconomy in the Church, so inconsistent with its true edification, and the nature of Christianity, according to the Scriptures of Truth, is owing to its Ministers, or at least the major part of them, (though I believe better things of some among them) for they finding their advantage in it, and having no call or commission from above for their ministry, like the true Ministers of Christ, who were commanded freely to give, as they

they had freely received ; and though they had neither provision of Scrip nor of Money, were to depend on the good providence of God for their subsistence. Ministers prepared by Arts and Sciences, and engaged in their work by worldly motives, for selfish ends ; more properly preach themselves, than Christ, and by assuming the highest veneration to themselves, possess the place of Christ in the Hearts of their hearers, and can only minister from the foundation of their own abilities and views of interest ; being more concerned to secure and increase their gain, than to reform any errors in the community, which ensures their pay ; against these God hath raised witnesses for the Truth, at different Times and Places, to strike at the Root of this Evil, the exterior emoluments of the Church, which Bulwark of Satan, till removed, will ever prevent the kingdoms of this World from becoming the kingdoms of Christ.

16. I am aware, that it may be said, if the government of the Church admitted, right or wrong, of a liberty for every Member to take upon himself to speak to the Congregation, pretending a divine call to Preach or Pray; this would introduce great confusion and disorder; but when this liberty is extended no farther than is consistent with the edification of the Assembly, agreeable to Scripture Precept and Example, the objection can have no weight; for every right publick Service will carry its own demonstration with it, that it proceeds from the Spirit of God. If no Man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, no Man under a less qualification can rightly Preach or Pray in the Church, accompanied with sound doctrine, and the prevalent force of example, administering Grace to the hearers, speaking as the Oracles of God, by the ability that he giveth; and granting some abuses might be consequent upon leaving room in the time of publick Worship, for the supernatural influences of inspiration; is this more than daily happens
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from the abuse of Civil Liberty, justly esteemed among the greatest blessings ? may not the same vigilance necessary, in either case, to prevent injuries to the community, inconsistent with its well being, be put in practice ? Let the impartial consider, whether a Ministry founded on temporal interest, though furnished with human Learning, can produce in the hearer any thing better than its own Image, Self Righteousness, the knowledge that puffeth up, which is earthly and sensual, and infidelity, as to that Faith, or supernatural Power, by which the Righteous, in all Ages, obtained victory over the lust which warreth against the Soul ?

17. Such Teachers have not enough digested the Apostle's Doctrine, that he that thinks he knows any thing, knows nothing yet as he ought ; which though a paradox, is to a demonstration an evident Truth ; when it is considered, that even our natural capacities as men, whether of Body or mind, are no acquirements of our own, but are the gifts of God, from whom
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every good and perfect gift comes ; therefore we rob God of the glory justly due to him, when we arrogate it in self-sufficiency to ourselves ; and if this be the case with respect to temporal Blessings, how much rather ought we to glorify God with our Bodies, and Spirits, which are his, for bounties of an eternal nature ; rejecting with shame the folly of pluming ourselves with such spurious decorations.

18. Now notwithstanding what I have said, of establishments in general, it may, and must be acknowledged, to the honour of the Church of England, that she hath shown more lenity to Dissenters, especially since the Revolution, than most, if not all other Churches which ever had the governing power in their Hands.

19. Some called Methodists, and divers of other professions, preach up Salvation by Faith alone, excluding the essential necessity of good works ; a doctrine diametrically opposite to that of the Apostle James,

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and as inconsistent with the design of the coming of Christ, to recover mankind from their depraved nature to their original purity, and according to Matth. i. 21. to save people from their Sins. Some of these screen themselves under the patronage of Bishop Beveridge, acknowledging they commit Sin in their very best actions, even in their preaching and praying; but what other tendency has this doctrine, than to exalt and establish the reign of the Devil, above that of Christ? Can we reflect without abhorrence on the vile hypocrisy and wickedness practised under this Antinomian principle in the last Age? Such egregious absurdities are the less astonishing, if we call to mind that Ministers, who have no commission from Christ, but merely from men, to preach the Gospel, must be in this very circumstance; for who hath required it at their Hands?

20. The doctrine of imputative Righteousness, exclusive of real Righteousness wrought by Christ in the members of his Body, is
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inconsistent with the restoration of mankind ; for where is the occasion of solicitude about freedom from the Devil's vassalage under Sin, if the righteousness of Christ as an attribute in him only will save us ? or the necessity of Sanctification, Justification, and Regeneration, if Salvation is already wrought by what Christ hath done without us ? some have said ironically, Will you not let Christ save you ? Will you purchase Salvation by your own merits ? such Preachers, who can preach and pray in their own will, and time, can know but little of the work of Salvation by the inestimable benefit of the Grace of God in the gift of his Holy Spirit, to enable men to work out their own Salvation ; without the aid of which, it must be acknowledged we are incapable of both thoughts, and actions, acceptable to God ; then what can be expected from the best sinful works even of preaching and praying, by Ministers who know not Christ to be Mouth and Wisdom to them, but on the contrary, seem to unite the most contrary things ; Light and Darkness, Christ and Belial, God
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and Mammon; and instead of preaching Christ to be the true Vine, in whom every true Christian must live, and to be the Bread of Life, the Way, the Truth, and the Light; the Pearl of great Price, the hidden Treasure, the leaven of the Kingdom, the good Seed, and the power under every Similitude, which can alone make true Members of his Church, and restore Man to his original perfection? the end of his infinite mercy and condescension by his Death and Sufferings, was to redeem mankind from all iniquity, and if, instead of principally directing men to wait for, and closely attend to this all-sufficient power in themselves, their teachers divert them from it, they rather contribute to the establishment of the reign of the Devil, and frustrate the design of Christ's coming to destroy his works.

21. It is pretended, that Sin is necessary to preserve men humble, and hide pride from them; may it not as well be said, that God intends not to be obeyed, though
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he commands it, and asserts its preference to Sacrifice? beside, Christ came to redeem to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works: Can pride be so well hid from Man as by the defence God has provided against every false Glory? since it is not by Man's power that he can be cleansed, or preserved from Sin: there is no occasion for recourse to such apologies, unless for the slothful servant, or to form an effectual screen for hypocrisy.

SECTION

SECTION V.

1. **T**HUS having taken a view of some defects in different Churches professing Christianity, I cannot see that they are properly intitled to the name of the true Churches of Christ; rightly acknowledging him to be, now as well as formerly, the chief Priest and Bishop in his Church, and the only foundation on which it stands, or can be established.

2. There is still another People, whose claim to be the true Church of Christ, stands much clearer than any of the preceeding Sects. Their ancestors, as well as many at present among them, were called from among all the empty forms and professions of Religion, to be a People, who were no People, wherein they had fought in vain, to find peace and rest to their Souls, though many of them had tried almost every form of Religion, at a time when speculations about it, as well as zeal in profession,

feſſion, were no leſs remarkable than at preſent.

3. Theſe finding their diſappointment in the various edifices of worſhip framed by human wiſdom, ſupported by human power, and endowed with human privileges and advantages, were at length brought to ceaſe from Man, and give ear to the voice of God in their own Souls, and to wait in the ſilence of all Fleſh, for his holy Inſtructions and divine Aſſiſtance, to come up in the practice of them; by which means they ſoon learned the neceſſity of Self Denial, and a daily Croſs, and were crucified to the world and the world to them; for they not only were brought to experience, a Death in themſelves, to the vanities of this Life, and the finful luſts of the Fleſh, but likewise to their own Self Righteouſneſs.

4. Thus they were reduced to the ſimple worſhip of God in Spirit and Truth, by the aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit, given through the inexpressible benefit of the Death, Sufferings,

ferings, and Resurrection of Christ, to lead and guide them into all Truth, and came to know the Apostle's Doctrine, that they could not pray as they ought, but as the Spirit helped their infirmities, with sighs and groans, Rom. iii. 26, which cannot be uttered in words.

5. In their perseverance in this exercise they knew a passing from Death to Life, by the energy of that Faith which works by Love, to the pulling down of the strong holds of Sin and Satan, and the subversion of the very foundations of the old Earth and Heavens, and experienced the Creation of a new Heaven and Earth, wherein dwells Righteousness.

6. Being thus prepared, they were constrained to forsake the various worships of their education, in the will and wisdom of Man, and oh, affecting trial of their Faith ! to forsake the love and friendship of their nearest Relations and Acquaintance, and all worldly Interests, to run up and down, and
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call their fellow Mortals to turn from Dark-
ness to the Light, wherewith Christ had en-
lightened them, and from the power of
Satan to God. Thus they were the means
of gathering a Church to Christ, which then
very remarkably appeared returning out of
the wilderness, according to, Canticles viii. 5.

7. They forsook Father and Mother,
House and Land, for Christ's sake and the
Gospel; and the promise of Christ was emi-
nently fulfilled in them; for they received
an hundred fold, in the exceeding great
reward of the joy, peace and comfort of
the Holy Ghost, and the enjoyments of new
Friends and Relations, such as the Lord him-
self acknowledged as Brethren; and as the
Apostle tells the Hebrews, Chapter xii. 23,
24. They were come to Mount Zion, and
unto the city of the living God, the heavenly
Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company
of Angels, to the general Assembly of the
First-born, which are written in Heaven,
and to God the Judge of all, and to the
Spirits of just men made perfect.

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8. These

8. These People were in derision called Quakers, because the remarkable effect of the intent exercise of their minds was attended in their worship, in many of them, with a visible trembling of their Bodies, under the awful dread of the most High, and the astonishing sense of his presence.

9. Thus having left the several Societies, among whom they had been formerly incorporated, they met together in the name of the Lord, and waited in humility and silence for the appearance of his Spirit to influence and guide every particular in his duty before him; free from the embarrassments of formal Psalms, Prayers, Ceremonials, and unconfined to the ministry of any particular Minister, appointed by Man; and as Christ declared himself to be in the midst of such, wherever gathered, they experienced his coming to teach his People himself, both immediately in their own Hearts, and instrumentally by his Ministers, called and qualified for that end in the School of Christ, whose Mouths were opened for the edification of the Assembly, suitably to the
several

several necessities of those to whom their ministry was directed by him; who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and can minister that portion, and kind of divine nourishment which the state and condition of every Soul requires, in the sight of God; by which both Minister and Hearer is qualified unto every good word and work.

10. This is the well known circumstance of a Society, concerning which, with sorrow it may be said of too many, that they know not the God of their Fathers; and many by a too eager pursuit of the Things of this Life, have declined in their first love, if they have not intirely lost it; yet there are still many living witnesses to the truth amongst them, sufficient to demonstrate them to be the true Church of Christ; not acted by their own selfish wills, or worldly motives in its edification.

11. The liberty they now enjoy as a Society, to worship God according to their Consciences, may be said, in a great degree, to be the purchase of the blood of many of
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their Ancestors ; among whom four were put to death in New England, and near four hundred in this Nation died in prison, besides which, numbers were sentenced to banishment. The sums of money taken from them by fines for absenting themselves from the established worship, and for meeting to worship God according to their Consciences, are incredibly large ; and, before the Revolution, fell little short of two hundred thousand Pounds within the limits of Great Britain and Ireland.

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12. May the great refiner of Souls cleanse and purify this Church from the corruption too many in profession with it have imbibed, add thousands without limits to their number, and make them more and more eminently a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid : for such as do the will of Christ, must gratefully acknowledge, that the Light still shines among them, which can never be totally eclipsed, to such enquiring Souls as are weary and heavy laden, and cannot be satisfied short of the true rest.

F I N I S.